Copy No. 36

~~SECRET~~

097.3
Z1092
4477

INDIA'S CONCEPTS OF ITS FUTURE ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

RA

OIR Report No. 4477

March 8, 1949

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF LIBRARIES
AND
REFERENCE SERVICES
APR 4 1949
REF FILE COPY
PLEASE RETURN

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of Research for Near East and Africa
OFFICE OF INTELLIGENCE RESEARCH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED
Authority NND760175
By C GD NARS Date DEC 29 1976

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
Summary		ii
Introduction		1
I.	Traditional Factors	1
A.	India's Cultural Mission in Southeast Asia	1
B.	India's Policy with Respect to Indians in Southeast Asia	4
II.	Political Aspects of India's Southeast Asian Policy	7
A.	India's Primary Objective	7
B.	India's Secondary Objectives	8
C.	The New Delhi Conference on Indonesia	9
III.	India's Future Economic Role in Southeast Asia	10
A.	Characteristic Statements	10
B.	India's Tactical Measures	12
C.	Hindrances to India's Program	14
IV.	India's Role in the Security of Southeast Asia	15
A.	Alternative Possibilities	15
B.	Britain's Hopes	16
1.	The British Security Plan for Southeast Asia	16
2.	India's Reaction to Great Britain's Proposals	18
C.	Indian Views on Security of Southeast Asia	18
1.	A "Monroe Doctrine" for Asia	18
2.	Criticism of the "Monroe Doctrine" Plan	21
3.	Implementing India's Southeast Asian Security Policy	21
D.	Possible Cooperation with US Security Measures	22

When this study outlives its usefulness to you, please return it to

Department of State
Office of Intelligence Research (OIR)
626 State Annex #1
Washington, D.C.

SUMMARY

India's assumptions concerning its manifest destiny to lead Southeast Asia toward freedom and regional integration have been noticeably modified during the first year and a half of independence. Contributory factors have been communal disorders, serious friction with Pakistan over Kashmir, and inability to develop industrially. These factors have impaired India's influence abroad and have made it impossible to afford economic assistance to its neighbors. India has been obliged to recede from its anti-imperialist role to the extent of British control in Malaya, and it has now abandoned offical support of the Vietnam cause despite strong popular sentiment in India opposing French rule. New Delhi has kept the goodwill of the Ceylon and Burma only by refraining from vigorous action in defense of unquestioned Indian interests in those countries.

The net result is that India's policy toward Southeast Asia has become identified increasingly with the single issue of Indonesian independence. In the Indonesian cause is wrapped up the measure of India's prestige as a nation, its security against a resurgence of colonial imperialism, and vindication of India's insistent demand for racial equality with the West. These issues constitute the very reason for India's political existence, and on the crucial issue of Indonesia New Delhi can not acknowledge defeat.

In an endeavor to bolster its prestige in the political field, India has acted as host to numerous international gatherings and has played a prominent role in the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), posing always as the helpful big brother to smaller Asiatic neighbors. Pandit Nehru's repeated disavowals of any intention to dominate the area have won for him a considerable measure of confidence. He has clearly succeeded in promoting closer relations among Asian peoples. An essential concomitant of Nehru's declared policy to maintain India's independence of rival world blocs is to create a "Third Bloc" of South Asian states able to function under

India's leadership as a stabilizing factor and as an international force for peace.

Recent shifts in India's concept of its role in Southeast Asia are attributable in part to widespread disillusionment concerning the previously assumed benevolent attitude of the USSR toward all nationalist liberation movements. The disillusionment arises from the revolutionary tactics pursued by the Communist Party in India and elsewhere, and Indian anxiety with respect to Southeast Asia has been greatly increased by recent Communist victories in China. The New Delhi government, therefore, is currently seeking to find some ground for cooperation with the US on the basis of Indonesian independence, so as to forestall the forbidding prospect of Communist-fomented chaos throughout Southeast Asia in some way other than by the restoration of European control. Until some such agreement is reached -- and perhaps indefinitely -- India will maintain Nehru's present official policy of non-alignment with either great-power grouping and will endeavor to strengthen its position as spokesman for Southeast Asian peoples. Any workable regional defense arrangement for Southeast Asia not only will require India's cooperation but also must be fitted into the broader sphere of British Commonwealth and American security plans for all of South Asia.

INTRODUCTION

Indian views with respect to Southeast Asia are colored by preconceptions regarding India's historic and future role of cultural leadership in the area and by the obligation to protect the interests of more than two million overseas Indians, principally in Ceylon, Burma, and Malaya. To these time-honored factors have been added in the post-war period the intense hostility of Indian opinion to colonialism in general and especially to the continuation of European imperial control over important areas of Southeast Asia. Some Indian leaders also envisage the possibility of India's becoming the spokesman for a South Asian regional bloc which would include neighboring independent states and newly emancipated countries of Southeast Asia. Indians foresee the possibility of developing profitable economic ties with Southeast Asian countries, to which an industrialized India would export textiles and other consumer goods and from which India would obtain in return needed minerals, timber, food, and oil-fuel supplies. India's strategic plans conform to the same general pattern but operate in a somewhat wider field. They include cooperation with British naval power, collaboration with Australia and with various countries of the Muslim Middle East, and possibly coordination with United States security measures in the Far East.

I. TRADITIONAL FACTORS

A. India's Cultural Mission in Southeast Asia

An informed Indian invariably views his country's role in Southeast Asia in the light of India's historic contribution to the cultural and political development of the area. The popular conception of India's past includes much that is legendary, but tangible evidences of unmistakable Indian influence survive in the architectural monuments of ancient Burmese cities such as Pagan, in the more

famous structures at Angkor in Cambodia, and in numerous localities throughout the Netherlands East Indies from Sumatra to Bali. The literary basis of the Buddhist cultures of Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Cambodia is of Indian derivation. Indian leaders accordingly picture free India as about to resume a cultural and civilizing mission to the East which was rudely interrupted several centuries ago by European intervention, now happily approaching an end. This flattering assumption of cultural leadership over Southeast Asia will persist indefinitely as an important psychological factor in determining India's attitude toward the area.

Emphasis on cultural manifest destiny affords several advantages. It does not invite charges of harboring political and economic designs, and yet it affords grounds for asserting India's primacy in Southeast Asia which the relatively ephemeral Western influence cannot successfully contest. At the Inter-Asian Relations Conference (IARC) of early 1947, the Indian delegation promoted their country's claim to be the cultural fountainhead of the New Asia. The Indian committee displayed a large number of monographs, published for the occasion, touching on a great variety of subjects and intended to demonstrate Indian erudition. Indian sponsors also assembled an impressive exhibition of artistic objects illustrating India's ancient cultural influence in Southeast Asia. Throughout the conference Indians emphasized the need for closer cultural and economic relations among Asian peoples, an opportunity which the unwelcome intrusion of European colonial regimes had denied them. A new milieu was thus established for the future relations of Asian peoples.

Observers at the conference conceded that Indians registered important gains in prestige even though few believed that the Indians actually established their pretentions to cultural leadership of Asia. The delegation was seriously handicapped by its own assertive and

argumentative conduct, and by India's inability to conceal evidences of internal disorganization, communal friction, and poverty. With respect to Southeast Asia in particular, however, the Indian delegates' efforts to ingratiate themselves were in striking contrast to the bullying tactics employed by principal Chinese spokesmen. Nehru's inter-Asia concept demonstrated vitality mainly in India's relations to Southeast Asia. Aspirations for regional leadership were subsequently demonstrated by India's readiness to serve as host to a variety of area conferences: on health, agriculture, labor, meteorology, economic problems, and aviation.

The establishment of India's cultural hegemony over Southern Asia is probably remote so long as the area has free access to the more highly developed technology of the Western World. The vitality of India's ancient culture has long since been spent and it is therefore not suitable for export. Present-day Hinduism exhibits strength only because of the sheer mass of its religious, social, and philosophical tradition, which has no relation to present-day practical considerations. Facilities within India for technical and scientific training, except in limited fields of local interest,[1] are decidedly inferior to those of Western countries with which all Southeast Asian countries have traditional connections. Even at the Delhi conference, the English language proved to be the only satisfactory medium of communication among the assembled delegates.

The peoples of Southeast Asia certainly doubt India's present ability to contribute materially to their cultural progress, and they all probably distrust India's intentions in varying degrees. Pandit

---

1. D-195, New Delhi, March 3, 1948. The Indian Standards Institution, dating from June 1947 and operating under the authorization of the International Organizations for Standards located at Geneva, has been assigned responsibility for standardizing shellac and mica. India has invited neighboring Ceylon, Nepal, Burma, and Malaya to join the Institution.

Nehru has attempted to disarm suspicion by studiously avoiding any appearance of expansionist intent. He has repeatedly deprecated talk of India's leadership of Asian peoples except in terms of promoting mutual cooperation and assistance in developing a common sphere of action for reciprocal advantage.[1] In conformity with this policy, the Indian publication which purports to be the organ of the IARC (United Asia) avoids controversial political questions, and stresses throughout the primacy of India's moral and cultural leadership in South Asia.

B. India's Policy with Respect to Indians in Southeast Asia

Independent India has inherited the traditional concern over the economic and social disabilities suffered by some two and one-quarter million Indians in Southeast Asia. Ceylon's 650,000 Tamil immigrants have long been denied economic and political rights enjoyed by the Island's domiciled nationals, and the former now look to independent India for protection. Malayan Indians, also largely Tamils numbering approximately three-quarters of a million, are a transient group of laborers who even when they qualify as local citizens enjoy fewer political rights than the native Malays. Burma's prewar Indian population -- numbering well over a million -- enjoyed meager representation in the elected legislature, encountered increasing difficulty after Burma's separation from India in 1937 in entering the government service, and suffered repeated violence at the hands of Burmese rioters during the 1930's,[2] and at the time of the evacuation of 1942. The postwar Burmese government has not welcomed the return of the Indian evacuees of 1942; it has virtually excluded Indians from government service and has moved to take over with little compensation vast Indian Chettyar holdings in the paddy

---

1. Characteristic statements by Nehru were made at Ootacamund on June 13, 1948 and before the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on March 28, 1948.
2. Especially in 1931 and 1938.

lands of Lower Burma. Under such circumstances the Government of India sooner or later will presumably have to undertake vigorous remedial action in behalf of overseas Indians in Southeast Asia.[1]

The postwar representations of the Government of India in support of the rights of overseas Indians living in Southeast Asia have been tempered by Pandit Nehru's great concern to cultivate friendly relations with the newly independent Governments of Burma and Ceylon and to avoid aiding the Chinese Communist cause in Malaya. The New Delhi authorities thus far have insisted that overseas Indians must decide whether they wish to retain their Indian citizenship or acquire citizenship in their country of residence, that those who qualify as citizens should enjoy full political and social rights, and that citizenship requirements should not be made unreasonably stringent. Pandit Nehru insists that overseas Indians who elect to retain their Indian nationality shall enjoy humane treatment and safety of their persons and property on the basis of most-favored-nation treatment.[2] As a conciliatory gesture to Burma, Nehru has agreed not to demand full compensation for economic losses incurred by those overseas Indians who cooperated with imperialist exploiters[3] (i.e., Chettyar money-lenders in Burma) but he has specified that any economic reforms such as land nationalization must apply equally to all holdings regardless of ownership. The Indian Government has refused to grant permission for new laborer emigration until recipient countries observe proper standards of employment, housing, and health for Indian laborers. Because satisfactory assurances have not been given, only those Indian laborers and artisans with a previous record of Southeast Asian domicile have

---

1. See OIR-1595, Indian Minorities in South and East Asia, September 8, 1944, UNCLASSIFIED. Indians in Siam before the war numbered only 5,000 to 10,000; in Sumatra and Java, 25,000; in Cambodia, some 6,000.
2. Pandit Nehru's speech of March 8, 1948.
3. The Statesman (Calcutta), December 6, 1947.

thus far been permitted to leave India.

Within the limits of Pandit Nehru's moderate policy, his government has registered objections to the disabilities suffered by Indian nationals in Ceylon; to Burma's Land Nationalization Act; and to the stringent regulations of the Burma Government for acquiring citizenship, for transfer of immovable property (land) belonging to Indians, and for limitation of annual land rents to an amount twice that of the taxes imposed. The Indian press has charged that Indian laborers in Malaya suffer discrimination as to wages, and that Indian banks which remained open during the Japanese occupation have been obliged by law to accept as valid the repayment of bank loans in worthless Japanese currency.[1] Generally speaking, however, the tribulations of the overseas Indians in Southeast Asia and the right of others to migrate to the area are not likely in the near future to become major factors in determining India's policy, particularly as long as Nehru is attempting to enlist the voluntary cooperation of the nationalist groups involved, in realizing more important political objectives.

The policy of the Government of India with respect to the rights of overseas Indians in Southeast Asia is intended also to establish a course of forbearance to which China may later be asked to subscribe. Except in Burma and Ceylon, the problem of the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asian countries is far more acute than that of the Indians. The Indian press avoids reference to rivalry with China in Southeast Asia; instead, it affirms that the two countries have a joint responsibility to eliminate racial discrimination throughout the area and to see that all domiciled sections of the population are properly assimilated into the national life of the several countries. Ideally, these ends are to be accomplished

---

1. Eastern Economist (New Delhi), April 16, 1948.

under conditions that would arouse no fears in Southeast Asian countries of domination or exploitation by their larger neighbors.[1] New Delhi strongly opposes the idea of dual citizenship for which overseas Chinese have long contended and is apparently ready to concede that the countries concerned have a right to make their own laws with respect to immigration. Nehru apparently believes that to pursue aggressive tactics regarding the rights of overseas Indians in Southeast Asia is to encourage Chinese intransigence and precipitate an eventual Indian-Chinese struggle for control.

II. POLITICAL ASPECTS OF INDIA'S SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLICY

A. India's Primary Objective

The primary political objective of the Government of India with respect to Southeast Asia is to eliminate European imperial influence. This policy if successful will accomplish the dual purpose of increasing India's control in that area and at the same time strengthen India's reputation as the champion of the nationalist movements in Southeast Asian countries. India's successful struggle for freedom greatly helped Ceylon and Burma to attain independence. Burma was a part of India administratively until 1937 and was in a strong position in the postwar period to demand from London political concessions equivalent to any granted India. Ceylon's liberation to full dominion status also followed in the wake of Britain's India policy. The Indian Government's current endeavors to obtain independence for the Indonesian Republic follow the same pattern and are intended to forestall any reversal of present tendencies to liquidate colonial controls in Southeast Asia.

India's lack of interest in "liberating" Malaya arises partly from its belief that no genuinely Pan-Malayan nationalist movement

---

1. Hindustan Times, (New Delhi), March 28, 1947.

exists, and partly from the active role which Communists play among the large resident Chinese population. The Malayan Indian Union is taking advantage of the emergency to encourage local Indians to participate in politics and otherwise to enhance their position vis á vis the Chinese. The Indian Government's surprisingly lukewarm attitude toward the cause of Vietnam appears to stem primarily from Nehru's anxiety lest India overextend its commitments. Indochina is remote from India's political and cultural interests, while Communist leadership in Vietnam and the region's susceptibility to influence from near-by China becloud the nationalist issue. As matters stand, India's reputation as the champion of liberation for Southeast Asia stands or falls on the outcome in Indonesia. If an independent Indonesian state can be established within the islands under the leadership of the Republic government, New Delhi may conclude that French rule in Indochina will also disappear in time. Nehru's occasional affirmation of an Asian "Monroe Doctrine" which would exclude all Western influence from Southeast Asia appears to have been advanced for bargaining purposes as a radical variant of the basic anti-colonial policy of the Indian Government.

B. India's Secondary Objectives

While pursuing India's primary objective of liberating Indonesia, the Indian Government has been proceeding toward a secondary objective of broadening the interrelationships of South Asian peoples, especially with India. Representative Indian leaders entertain no idea of encouraging any kind of Southeast Asian federation without India's active participation. But Indian policy apparently would not oppose the maintenance by any Southeast Asian country of direct economic and cultural relations with Western powers, so long as free communication throughout the area were permitted and so long as the terms of foreign investments do not threaten revived imperial control. India's inability to supply the technical and financial assistance needed by Southeast Asian countries and the inherent threat to Indian interests if Chinese Communists widen their control over the

area will strengthen the tendency at New Delhi to seek some basis of compromise with the West. If India contemplates setting up a South Asian regional organization that would cooperate with the West, the two essential requirements appear to be the establishment of a genuinely independent Indonesia and India's participation as the major partner.

As a third political objective, Pandit Nehru would obviously like to develop a larger regional affiliation extending westward as far as Ethiopia and the Arab states and eastward as far as the Philippines and Australia. Indian spokesmen on numerous occasions have presumed to speak for various countries included in this group and by implication have challenged China's status as primary representative of Asia in the UN by insisting that one of the non-permanent seats of the UN Security Council be assigned to a country representing South Asia.

C. The New Delhi Conference on Indonesia

Pandit Nehru's most important overt move in developing a South Asian bloc within the UN was his calling of the Conference on Indonesia at New Delhi in January 1949. The second and third resolutions approved by the delegates of the nineteen countries[1] attending the conference envisaged continuing consultation on Indonesia both through diplomatic channels and through the UN, and looked toward the devising of machinery for future consultation and concerted action on matters of common interest. Although Pandit Nehru as chairman of the conference discouraged the tendencies to extend its frame of reference beyond the bounds of the Indonesian issue and to exacerbate racial relations, the threat of an East-West rift is inherent in the situation. India called the conference to further its acknowledged objective of organiz-

---

1. These countries extended from Ethiopia and Egypt in the west to China, the Philippines and New Zealand in the east.

ing around India a "Third Bloc" of states unaffiliated with either of the two Great Power blocs and presumably capable of promoting world peace. Because the conference conducted its sessions with dignity and despatch, encountered no serious opposition from the Great Powers, and succeeded to the extent of influencing in some measure the concurrent action on Indonesia by the UN Security Council, India's move toward regional leadership was effective and will be tried again.

It is doubtful that a closely knit South Asian bloc including all the states represented at the New Delhi conference will actually emerge because of the many political cross-currents. Pandit Nehru has nevertheless established a substantial claim for India's leadership in Southeast Asia and has elicited considerable enthusiasm in Pakistan, Burma, Indonesia, and the Philippines for developing one or more regional organizations in South Asia. The possibility of mobilizing nationalist sentiment as a bulwark against Communist infiltration and control of the area has been stressed explicitly by Filipino spokesmen and is implicit in conservative Indian press reactions.

III. INDIA'S FUTURE ECONOMIC ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

A. Characteristic Statements

In the economic field Indian leaders definitely expect to expand their trade with Southeast Asian countries in the fairly immediate future and to contribute materially to industrial development of the area. The authors of an unofficial report sponsored by the Indian Council of World Affairs in 1947 expressed confidence that with international assistance "Southeast Asia can be drawn together in a vast and prosperous unity based on planned development... guided and assisted by the United Nations." A more recent and frank disclosure of characteristic thinking on the subject is contained in the following excerpt from a book by Madan Gopal:[1]

---

1. India As A World Power (New Delhi, 1948), pp. 76, 89.

> From the point of view of the sinews of war, South-East Asia, the richest area in the world, is one unit. It produces what India lacks for the defense of the Indian Oceanic zone. Ninety per cent of the world's output in rubber, 66 percent of tin, 90 per cent of quinine and nearly all manila hemp come from this area. It produces a surplus of sugar, rice and forest wealth and has all the oil wealth that has so far been found in the Indian defence zone -- the oil production of the Dutch East Indies is equal to half the combined supply of Iran and Iraq. South-East Asia can meet India's needs in sugar, rice, forest wealth for shipbuilding etc. and oil and in return expects consumer goods that India manufactures, such as textiles, cement and leather goods, commodities in which India's trade with these countries are quite as strong as our spiritual links. We have what they need and need what they have. In our self-interest alone we must cultivate a close friendship with all these countries .... Indian goods successfully compete with the products of Britain and America, her only two rivals. The collapse of Japan has presented her with a gap in the shape of markets which she can fill. She can also supply these areas with capital goods.

Prime Minister Nehru, in an important address before the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on March 28, 1948, declared that economic, defensive, and geographic considerations all dictated that India should cooperate closely with Southeast Asian countries in developing a common sphere of action. Burma, Ceylon, and Nepal would be included from the first, he continued, and Pakistan would come in as soon as various difficulties -- including customs barriers -- were removed. He predicted that Malaya, Siam, Indochina, and Indonesia would gradually join the nucleus once these countries were freed from foreign control. He also expressed confidence that Australia and New Zealand would eventually find a place in the Southeast Asia group. He made no prediction about the affiliation of the Philippines or the Middle Eastern states. In Nehru's thought, obviously, a Southeast Asian geographic and economic grouping for mutual advantage was inherent in the situation and should not be attributed to any design on India's part to dominate the area or to organize it against anyone.[1]

---

1. Bombay Chronicle, March 29, 1948.

At the Ootacumund ECAFE Conference in June 1948 Nehru commented again on India's economic role in Southeast Asia as follows:

> I want this problem [of economic development] to be approached...in a spirit of cooperation between all the countries of Asia, big or small. If any country pulls more than its weight, well and good.... But this business of any country thinking of itself as the leader of others smacks too much of a superiority complex which is not desirable in organizations working together for the common good.[1]

B. India's Tactical Measures

Despite the conciliatory words of India's Prime Minister, his government has on numerous occasions presumed to act as self-appointed economic leader in the Southeast Asian area. In the initial stages of the negotiation of a treaty covering American aviation rights in India, for example, New Delhi made an unsuccessful attempt to include Burma and Ceylon within India's cabotage control area. During India's negotiations with Britain in 1947 on shipping, the Government of India advanced an untenable claim that seventy-five percent of all seaborne traffic between Burma, Ceylon, and India be reserved for Indian vessels, as well as thirty percent of the prewar volume of Axis shipping serving Southeast Asian countries.

At the Southeast Asia Rice Conference held in Trivandrum in the spring of 1947, the Indian delegation -- again presuming to speak for the entire area -- challenged directly the right of metropolitan European states to share in deciding economic matters affecting Southeast Asia, and made no attempt to conceal India's plans to organize an Asiatic coalition in opposition to European colonial interests. The following statement of India's spokesman at Trivandrum will illustrate:[2]

---

1. United Asia, (New Delhi, July 1948) I, No. 1, 5.
2. FAO/UN, Report of the Rice Study Group, Trivandrum, Travancore State, India, May 16-June 6, 1947.

> Asia is no longer content to have its domestic affairs managed either from London or from Washington. Rice is the one agricultural commodity that is preeminently the domestic concern of Asia, and particularly of Southeast Asia. It is a matter of self-respect for us that it shall no longer be controlled from Washington.... India does not seek to be a big power. The role of India is that of a big brother helping smaller brothers to the extent that they need help.... Rice relates to a concentrated area of the world and it must be dealt with by the people of that region. Theirs is the need, theirs is the right, and theirs is the responsibility.... The United States has demanded and obtained freedom for American affairs from non-American interference. India too demands freedom for Asiatic affairs from non-Asiatic interference.

India's efforts at Trivandrum to set up a Southeast Asia rice board independent of the International Emergency Food Council (IEFC) for the purpose of allocating the exportable rice production of Southeast Asian countries was blocked only because the Burma delegation, unwilling to risk India's control of Burma's rice exports, sided with the European and American opposition.

In successive ECAFE conferences India has persistently denounced the alleged "interference" of Western powers in the economic affairs of Asia. When ECAFE was first projected in July 1947, India challenged the principle that colonial proprietorship constituted a proper basis for membership and demanded that full membership be accorded only to governments genuinely representative of peoples resident in Southeastern Asia. At the Baguio meeting later in 1947, the Indian spokesman objected strongly to the claim of Western powers to a predominant voice in ECAFE and offered to lead the countries to the Orient in opposition to colonial imperialism. But although the Indian delegate pressed strongly at Baguio for the admission of Indonesia, he refused to support Vietnam's request for admission and voted instead to accept the French-nominated Laotian and Cambodian delegates. At the Ootacamund meeting of ECAFE in June 1948, India's strong delegation almost wrecked the conference by insisting upon full membership for Indonesia and by attempting to reduce non-Asiatic members to associate member status only. The Indonesian Republic was finally

...

admitted to ECAFE at the Lapstone meeting. In all these maneuvers it is apparent that India was concerned primarily with realizing political objectives.

C. Hindrances to India's Program

Indian spokesmen have admitted their country's inability to make any substantial contribution to the economic development of countries represented in ECAFE. At Ootacamund India's representatives talked about refusing to accept outside assistance on onerous terms and depending on self-help, and threatened to hold back needed raw material exports in order to procure more capital goods. They concluded their pleas, however, with the assertion that advanced industrial powers had an obligation to assist Asia economically and implied that India itself was the most worthy candidate for such assistance. India's proposal at Ootacamund that plans for utilizing Japanese industrial capacity be adjusted to the economic requirements of ECAFE countries was a further admission of dependence on outside aid. India's incapacity for genuine economic leadership in Southeastern Asia was fully demonstrated in the collapse of their ambitious scheme to establish ECAFE as an operating agency for the rehabilitation of the Far East utilizing several billion dollars in credits which the US was expected to provide.

The reasons for India's incapacity relate to the basic weakness of the country's own economy and to its lack of complementarity with the economies of Southeast Asia. Besides a chronic food shortage in the face of increasing needs, India suffers from falling industrial production, an impaired transportation system, and inability to replace worn out tools or to add new equipment. Coal resources are short and hydroelectric power probably cannot be produced on any substantial scale for a decade or more. The decline of governmental efficiency aggravates basic economic difficulties. Except in limited categories, therefore, Southeast Asia cannot expect within the next decade to procure needed consumer goods from India,

while capital goods and technical assistance from India will be largely unavailable. India's basic exports of jute, hides, tea, dotton, and manganese will not seek markets in Southeast Asia. Conversely a considerable portion of Burma's rice, teak, and potential oil output would normally go to India, but India will not be the market for Southeast Asia's rubber, tin, lead,and zinc, tungsten, sugar, tea, copra, and hemp and for much of the surplus rice and teak.[1] In short, Indian ideas of exercising economic leadership in Southeast Asia lack substantial content.

India is certainly in no position to duplicate or take over the useful work of the British Commissioner for Southeast Asia, a post which is now filled by the Governor-General at Singapore. This program was initiated in 1946 by Lord Killearn, and was designed to promote regional economic cooperation on an ad hoc basis in allocating shipping, filling supply requirements, and exchanging statistical data. The unilateral assumption by the Special Commissioner of broad responsibilities for both economic and security ends is an imaginative attempt to integrate the area on the basis of British leadership and prestige. Lord Killearn's instructions to maintain connections with the Governments of India, Australia, and New Zealand indicate the strategic importance of the Commissionership in total Commonwealth strategy. The participation of the Southeas t Asian Commissioner in the New Delhi conference of February 1949 on mediation in Burma was intended to bring that officer more prominently into the security program.

IV. INDIA'S ROLE IN THE SECURITY OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

A. Alternative Possibilities

With respect to the defense of its sea and land approaches

---

1. Approximately ten percent of the total value of India's trade in 1947 was with Southeast Asia, but a very large fraction of this trade was with Burma.

from Southeast Asia, India can choose any one of three alternative policies. The first would be to fall in line with the British proposal of a defense system based on the cooperation of all Commonwealth countries peripheral to the India Ocean and utilizing British naval and air power. The second would be to set up an exclusively Asian alliance that would enlist the cooperation of existing and future states of Southeast Asia and balance Indian and Chinese interests in that area. The third alternative would call for India's adjustment to the larger sphere of Anglo-American collaboration and some willingness to compromise on the colonial issue.

B. Britain's Hopes

1. The British Security Plan for Southeast Asia. The basic details of the British security plan have been explained in Guy Wint's book, The British in Asia,[1] which was circulated privately in 1947 and published in 1948. The author argues strongly in behalf of a British-Indian defense alliance as the essential ingredient in any South Asian security scheme. Wint insists that, while India is undergoing revolutionary readjustments of major dimensions, the country cannot without British assistance exert the stabilizing influence required in adjacent areas of Southeast Asia. Conversely, any attempt on Great Britain's part to establish a defensive confederation for Southeast Asia would be unsuccessful if it did not include India's active participation. Wint argues that India's defense requires that its sea approaches remain in friendly hands and that border lands not be occupied by any potential attacker, and that the smaller Asian nations would enjoy no security at all if left to their own resources. He proposes, therefore, that Great Britain and India use former elements of the British Asian Empire as a nucleus for a regional defense council

---

1. Guy Wint, The British in Asia (London, 1947) pp. 177-205. Wint has long been a career employee of the British Foreign Office, with responsibility for South Asian policy.

which would formulate a common foreign policy and plan for the economic development of the area. Subordinate political and economic councils would be assigned consultative and perhaps arbitral functions to help settle differences among the members that might otherwise stand in the way of cooperation in defense matters. The whole structure could qualify as a regional organization under the UN and receive UN backing. Such a British-Indian alliance, in Wint's opinion, would reinforce and steady the entire international system, afford India time to accomplish necessary political and economic adjustments, assure the country's access to oil, mineral, and food resources of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, and involve for India less disadvantage than any other outside connection. He conceded, however, that India would renounce its Pan-Asian dreams and forego its desire to remain independent of major world-power groupings only to the extent that it became aware of its dependence for security on cooperation with Great Britain.

Great Britain's strategic position in Southeast Asia is currently based upon her established positions at Trincomalee in Ceylon and at Singapore. It is buttressed by the treaty of January 1946 with Siam -- cosigned by India at Britain's insistence -- and by the treaty of October 1947 with Burma. Under Article VI of the Siam treaty, the Siamese Government acknowledged Siam's importance to the defense of neighboring areas, including India, and agreed to collaborate in all international security arrangements for the region approved by the UN. Under the Burma treaty, the British were accorded until January 1951 free use of airfields in Lower Burma plus the exclusive right to provide a military, naval, and air mission to help develop Burma's defense establishment. Britain expects the cooperation of Pakistan in any defense scheme for the Bay of Bengal and Australia and presumably New Zealand are ready to accede to the British plan. Therefore only India's concurrence is required to lay the foundation for a defense arrangement basic to any fully-organized regional system.

2. India's Reaction to Great Britain's Proposals. The principal difficulty with the British scheme is that, for the moment at least, Pandit Nehru will have none of it. His comments at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London and on other occasions have indicated that he is not ready to confine India's relations to any Commonwealth framework. He insists that Western countries must henceforth recognize Asia's proper international status, and that the central importance of India in South Asia must be explicitly acknowledged. Clearly implied also in the Indian Government's position is that no cooperation in a British-sponsored defense scheme is feasible as long as the eventual liquidation of Dutch and French colonial regimes is in doubt.

C. Indian Views on Security of Southeast Asia

1. A "Monroe Doctrine" for Asia. A detailed plan entitled "India and Security in Southeast Asia", which appeared in January 1947 and probably reflected official thinking at the time, was prepared by a group of distinguished academicians and publicists affiliated with the Indian Council of World Affairs.[1] The authors were concerned primarily with insuring that Southeast Asian countries cease to be the object of Big Power rivalry, and that they no longer be drawn into world conflicts as mere camp followers. To this end they proposed a "Monroe Doctrine" for Asia. The report expressed confidence that once Big Power patronage with its accompanying political privileges were withdrawn from Southeast Asia, India would be in position to supervise the rehabilitation of the area without arousing suspicion of ulterior designs. Only after component parts of the area attained complete freedom and after equality of treatment was guaranteed on a non-exploitive basis would the Big Powers participate in economic

---

1. P.S. Lookanathan et al., India and Security in Southeast Asia, MS. (New Delhi, 1947). Six of the authors preferred to remain anonymous; it has been assumed that the group included high government officials.

development and in establishing a regional security system.

The proposal outlined the structure of a regional government designed to function as an arm of the UN and allied agencies in all matters falling within its territorial limits. The organization would include representatives of the peoples of Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Malaya, Indonesia, Indochina, the Philippines, China, and India. Colonial regimes would not be represented, but self-governing political units associated with a metropolitan power for well-defined purposes could join. No attempt would be made to enlist the participation of peoples over the heads of governments. The regional organization would be commissioned as a kind of watchdog of the UN, to check developments that might cause ideological, racial, or economic conflicts, military security would be the general responsibility of the UN.

The report suggested that India and China take the initiative in establishing the regional security organization as soon as the two countries attained internal peace and stability. Japan, Australia, and New Zealand might be called upon to cooperate on occasion, but the imperialist ambitions of the first and the white immigration policies of the latter two would preclude their continuous participation. China's counsel would be required for handling difficult questions of migration and settlement. Inclusion of the Philippines, although not considered necessary, would discourage the islands from combining with any alternative grouping hostile to India.

Representation in the proposed "Political Organ" of the council would vary with the importance of the member countries.[1] India and China would have five votes each; Indochina and Indonesia, two each; the other five members, one vote each. A total of twelve of the seventeen votes would be required for approval of any proposal, thus ruling out any unilateral Indian or Chinese veto. A regional court of inter-

---

1. India and China would each pay one-third of the cost; one-third would be pro-rated among other members on a population basis.

national justice, composed of the Chief Justices of the member countries, would exercise original jurisdiction over disputes arising among members, though appeals could be made to the Permanent Court of the UN.

Subordinate councils would follow the general UN pattern. An economic and social council would aid in procuring technical experts to assist members in such fields as finance, industry, and business management and would also operate as a clearing house for information. A migration council would formulate principles governing treatment of immigrants, detect discriminatory practices, and promote arbitration of disputes. A cultural council would encourage intellectual cooperation through conferences, exchange of students, and regional research institutes dealing with medical and scientific problems of the area. Rangoon and Singapore were proposed as possible headquarters for the organization.

As a means of placating nationalist sentiment in Southeast Asia, the report recommended that the right of the states to determine their own immigration and economic policies be acknowledged in principle. States of Southeast Asia would be required in turn to accord to domiciled Indians and Chinese such civil and political rights and access to business opportunities as were granted to Europeans. The report foresaw the possibility of opposition -- on the part of nationalist groups in Siam, Malaya, and Indonesia -- to Chinese economic influence, but expressed confidence that all such problems could be settled on the basis of reciprocal concessions among national governments, once metropolitan power controls were withdrawn.

One section of the report, obviously drafted by a person with pro-Soviet leanings, denounced the efforts of the UK and US Governments to set aside the UN principle of unanimity of the Great Powers and to suppress -- through lend-lease aid to the metropolitan governments -- all nationalist and democratic movements in Southeast Asia. This pro-Soviet outburst, highly partisan in tone, indicated that any

apparent vindication of the Soviet interpretation of Anglo-American policy toward colonial Asia would have an important bearing on the future international alignment of India.

2. Criticism of the "Monroe Doctrine" Plan. The authors of the report were singularly blind to the unwillingness of the peoples of Southeast Asia to entrust their future security to a regional organization dominated by India and China to the exclusion of Western influence. Ceylon's Government, for example, would much prefer to remain within the British Commonwealth because of existing and potential differences with India. Burma might follow Nehru's lead temporarily, but it will eventually have to negotiate grave differences with India over treatment of resident Indians, payment for Chettyar-held land, and Burma's large debt to India. The Indian plan is even less realistic with respect to Siam, which has returned to its prewar position in Britain's economic sphere and would certainly prefer security guarantees from some more dependable source than India and China. It is scarcely conceivable moreover that Indochina, Malaya, or the Philippines would fit into the proposed Indian regional pattern. Therefore, Indonesia alone would remain to welcome India's assistance in organizing the area along nationalist lines. The report is significant because it reflects the presumptuous and unrealistic character of much of Indian thinking about the country's future role in Southeast Asian affairs.

3. Implementing India's Southeast Asian Security Policy. India's security plan has been only partially carried out. Pandit Nehru in July 1947 announced a "Monroe Doctrine" for Asia, which he has since amplified by assertions that European control was an affront to Asia and that any attempt to reimpose Western colonial regimes in Southeast Asia would constitute a threat to world peace. India applied the idea of an India-led regional conference acting as watchdog for the UN at the New Delhi Conference of January 1949 on Indonesia. Nehru's inclusion of Middle and Near Eastern states in the conference indicated that both political and security objectives were involved. Ceylon

and Siam participated in the conference with great reluctance; only Pakistan, Burma, the Philippines, and Australia responded with some enthusiasm. India's willingness to accept security responsibilities in Southeast Asia has been demonstrated more recently by Pandit Nehru's abortive offer to mediate -- in cooperation with other British Commonwealth countries -- in Burma's civil war. It is significant that Pakistan participated enthusiastically in the Indonesian Conference which included Near Eastern states, but declined to associate itself -- under India's leadership -- with the Commonwealth mediation proposal for Burma.

The problem of Indian-Chinese rivalry over leadership in Southeast Asia has emerged repeatedly. It was clearly in evidence at the Inter-Asian Relation Conference and has appeared at successive ECAFE meetings. At the Indonesian Conference China was represented only by an observer who did not sign the resolutions approved by the delegates. This Indian-Chinese rivalry is likely to become more intense if a strong Communist regime extends over South China.

Although Pandit Nehru has made notable progress in obtaining world recognition for India's assumed role as leader of Southeast Asia, he has a long way to go before any regional organization is achieved. Southeast Asian peoples, and probably the Arab states, may support sanctions against the Dutch on the Indonesian issue, but India is not strong enough governmentally or economically to exercise positive leadership over a group in which so many cross-currents are present. The most India can do under the circumstances is to advance a presumptive claim to a sphere of influence and bolster its prestige whenever opportunity is afforded.

D. Possible Cooperation with US Security Measures

A more cautious point of view on India's security policy for Southeast Asia emerged in the conservative Indian press during 1948. One reason for it is the growing awareness that India's faltering economic and political structure could not sustain unilaterally the

burden of maintaining security in Southeast Asia. It is equally apparent to many informed Indians that Commonwealth cooperation within itself could provide no genuine security for India in case of a major war because Great Britain's own position in western Europe is too precarious. Another important contributing factor has been Congress Party revulsion against the disruptive revolutionary program pursued by the Communist Party of India since March 1948, an action which has gone far to dispel Indian confidence in the benevolent intentions of the USSR. Indians are beginning to acknowledge that the essential factor in protecting South Asia from attack is America's power position in the Mediterranean and in the South China Sea.

Within recent months Communist victory in China has raised the specter of similar regimes spreading throughout Southeast Asia. The official Indian view is to discount the danger of Soviet control of Communist China and to regard the threat as essentially Chinese. Indian anxiety over the spread of Communism came to light in initial press criticism of the United States for abandoning support of the Kuomintang and in the alarmist press treatment of the recent Tokyo rumor that the US regards its position in Japan as militarily untenable if there is war with the USSR. Such considerations argue that India must fit its own security plans into a larger sphere than that afforded by a Southeast Asian bloc.

It is in the light of this changing point of view that India's efforts to find some common ground with the US Government looking toward settlement of the Indonesian dispute must be weighed. New Delhi spokesmen justify their policy in Indonesia by insisting that control of the nationalist cause in Southeast Asia must not go by default to the Communists. Moscow fully appreciated the implications of Pandit Nehru's refusal to invite Soviet representatives to his Indonesian Conference in 1949, and his successful endeavors to limit discussion to a single issue and to avoid exacerbating East-West relations. The USSR was being ignored on the very colonial issue which the Kremlin had expected to use

to attract Southeast Asian support. Accordingly, the Moscow radio charged that Nehru's real purpose was not to support Indonesia but to establish a regional Asian alignment hostile to Communism and allied with Anglo-American reaction. Some color has been given to Moscow's accusation by the recent exhortations of General Romulo that Asian nationalism must unite to oppose Communist advance.

The inaccuracy of the Soviet interpretation is patent to all who are aware of the deep concern in India over the fate of Indonesia. Nehru's objective was to dramatize Asian opposition to Dutch policy as a means of influencing UN action, and to maintain the threat that this pent-up anger would be channelled against the US if appropriate remedial measures were not taken. New Delhi would welcome thoroughgoing American support of the Indonesian Republican cause and might possibly regard it as providing an acceptable basis for American-Indian cooperation in carrying out security measures for Southeast Asia. A more likely prospect is that Pandit Nehru will await more complete clarification of the status of European control throughout the area or some turn of international events that will improve India's bargaining position. India has much to contribute to the security of Southeast Asia; it is the only large Oriental land base that is currently functioning on its own power and in an orderly fashion; it is capable of furnishing to the Anglo-American bloc unlimited manpower and extensive economic resources. Indian leaders are not prone to underestimate the importance of their country. It must be assumed, therefore, that Pandit Nehru -- for domestic as well as international reasons -- will stand by his refusal to align himself with the Western bloc and will seek to enhance India's reputation as the leader of the peoples of Southern Asia, even though such a course will obviously not provide adequate security for the area.